knew when to hammer out a compromise with integrity,'' said Rabbi David Saperstein, a longtime colleague.

''The strange thing about working in civil rights is that you always feel that you are stuck in a period of great difficulty,'' Mr. Taylor said in a 1999 interview with the D.C. Bar magazine. ''There was tremendous resistance to the Brown decision, and then we went through all of the tumultuous violence of the 1960s. There were times when it felt very grave, ugly and hateful. But every few years you look up and realize that things have changed in fundamental ways.'' Mr. Taylor helped bring about that fundamental change.

[From the New York Times, June 29, 2010]

WILLIAM TAYLOR, VIGOROUS RIGHTS DEFENDER, DIES AT 78

(By Douglas Martin)

William L. Taylor, who as a lawyer, lobbyist and government official for more than a half century had significant roles in pressing important civil rights cases and in drafting and defending civil rights legislation—died Monday in Bethesda, Md. He was 78 and lived in Washington. His son, David Van Taylor, said the direct cause of death was fluid in his lungs, a complication of a head injury he suffered in a fall a month ago.

William Taylor began his long fight for racial justice as a young lawyer at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund Inc. working with Thurgood Marshall, who would later become a Supreme Court justice. He helped fight some of the difficult civil rights battles that followed the Supreme Court order in 1954 that schools be desegregated. One assignment was writing much of the brief that persuaded the court to order the continued desegregation of schools in Little Rock, Ark., in an extraordinary summer session in 1958. The local school board had decided to suspend desegregation because of heated resistance the previous year.

Mr. Taylor went on to the United States Commission on Civil Rights as general counsel and staff director during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. He directed research that contributed to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the 1968 Fair Housing Act.

Later victories included negotiating a voluntary school desegregation plan in St. Louis in the 1980s as well as deals with other school systems. In a statement Tuesday, the N.A.A.C.P. called Mr. Taylor ''a staunch advocate for educational equity throughout his storied legal career.''

Starting in 1982, Mr. Taylor used his position as vice chairman of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights to help renew and strengthen some of the major civil rights legislation of the 1960s.

He headed a team of lawyers assembled by the conference that evaluated civil rights enforcement in the first year of the Reagan administration. In a 75-page report, the lawyers found that the administration had ''repudiated'' constitutional interpretations by the Supreme Court that protected rights and that it had attacked lower courts for protecting minorities.

''For more than half a century, Bill Taylor's voice was synonymous with equality,'' Representative George Miller, the California Democrat who is chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, said in a statement.

Mr. Taylor is also credited with helping to devise a strategy by liberals to defeat President Ronald Reagan's nomination of Robert Bork to the Supreme Court in 1987, partly by recruiting well-known law professors to criticize him. Mr. Taylor could sometimes be unpredictable, as when he openly supported President George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind law to overhaul education. Liberal critics called the measure punitive, poorly financed and too oriented toward standardized tests.

William Lewis Taylor was born on Oct. 4, 1931 to first-generation immigrants from Lithuania in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn. In speeches over the years he said that as a Jewish teenager he had experienced anti-Semitism in a neighborhood that Jews shared mainly with Italians. ''I remember being pushed around as a kid and being called a 'Christ killer,' '' he once said. He became aware of prejudice against blacks, he said, when he saw whites harass Jackie Robinson when he broke baseball's color line in 1947.

Mr. Taylor attended Brooklyn College, where he was editor of the college newspaper. The college president suspended him for printing an article that the president had objected to; it said a professor had been denied tenure because of his political views. A decade later, when Mr. Taylor was applying for a job with the federal government, Brooklyn College officials urged the government not to hire him. According to his F.B.I. file, college officials said that as a student he had ''espoused liberal causes such as the rights of the Negro in the South,'' The New York Times reported in 2001.

That year, in a gesture of both contrition and pride, Brooklyn College awarded Mr. Taylor an honorary degree. Christoph M. Kimmich, the college president, called him ''a person who represents what this institution is about.''

Mr. Taylor graduated from Brooklyn College in 1952 and Yale Law School in 1954, wrote many articles and two books, and taught at the law schools of the Catholic University of America, Stanford and Georgetown.

His wife, the former Harriett Elaine Rosen, a trial judge in Washington for 17 years, died in 1997. In addition to his son, Mr. Taylor is survived by his daughters, Lauren and Deborah Taylor; his brother, Burton; and three grandchildren.

In the 1950s, Mr. Taylor was a popular contestant on the game show ''Tic-Tac-Dough,'' his son said. When producers offered him answers, which would have guaranteed his earnings, he refused. He later testified to a grand jury investigating quiz show fraud. The jury foreman, who had heard the testimony of other ''Tic-Tac-Dough'' contestants, informed Mr. Taylor that he had won more money than anyone else who had not taken answers. His son said that was a lasting source of pride.

REMARKS OF RALPH G. NEAS, PRESIDENT AND CEO, NATIONAL COALITION ON HEALTH CARE, MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR WILLIAM L. TAYLOR, TIFERETH SYNAGOGUE, JUNE 30, 2010

Good Morning.

Lauren, Debbie, David, Simone, Jesse, Nathaniel, Burt and Susan, other members of the family and friends, I am honored to be with you today.

Sometimes in your life, you get lucky. It certainly happened to me when I met my wife, Katy. It happened again when our daughter, Maria, entered our lives. And it most definitely happened one Spring day in 1974. My first boss, Senator Edward W. Brooke, was fighting those who were trying to undermine school desegregation.

The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR) offered to help Senator Brooke. Into the office walked Arnie Aronson, Clarence Mitchell, Joe Rauh, and Bill Taylor. At age 26, I was in one room with this extraordinary group of individuals who would mentor me for the next four decades. I did not know it then, but I had just won the lottery. And, except for Katy, no one has been with me more over that span of time than Bill Taylor. Bill was one part mentor, one part side-kick. Whether it was civil rights advocacy, playing tennis, discussing baseball, listening to jazz, or going to the movies; we did it together.

By the time I met Bill, he was in his forties. In many ways, Bill, along with Mary Frances Berry and Raul Yzaguirre, served as bridges between the great generation of the Rauhs, Mitchells, Dorothy Heights, and Aronsons and that of my peers, who were just coming of age—Marcia Greenberger, Elaine Jones, David Saperstein, Antonia Hernandez, Judy Lichtman, Barbara Arnwire, Wade Henderson, Nan Aron, Karen Narasaki and so many others in this room.

By the time we met, Bill already had a distinguished professional career. Right out of Yale Law School, he joined the staff of Thurgood Marshall at the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. His first major case was Cooper v. Aaron, the historic 1958 Little Rock school desegregation decision. Now, that's one hell of a way to begin a career!

For the next 50 years, Bill continued his abiding interest in equal educational opportunity, especially in important school desegregation cases across the country. Bill went on to become the head of the United States Commission on Civil Rights where he supervised important investigative and research work that helped lay the foundation for the enactment of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the 1968 Fair Housing Act.

While Bill and I teamed up many times in the 1970's, our real partnership began in April of 1981 when I became the Executive Director of LCCR. For the next 12 years, we were inseparable, constituting with the leaders I have mentioned previously, a core group of strategists, organizers, lawyers, and advocates that remained close and effective over the years.

But during the Reagan-Bush Administrations, Bill Taylor helped the Civil Rights Movement perform the impossible. In the face of huge resistance, LCCR directed two-dozen national campaigns that strengthened every major civil rights law, overturned more than a dozen adverse Supreme Court decisions, and defeated the Supreme Court nomination of Robert Bork. Laws enacted included the 1982 Voting Rights Act, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1988, the Fair Housing Act Amendments of 1988, the Civil Rights Act of 1991 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Bill's role in all of these hard fought victories was that of the indispensable senior advisor.

As essential as Bill was to my professional life, he was also a vital part of my personal life. Indeed, Bill Taylor, along with Mary Frances, actually lent me the money I needed to buy an engagement ring for Katy. He then joined Katy and me in Des Moines, Iowa, Thanksgiving 1988, to be a member of our wedding party. Again with Mary Frances, Bill became a Godparent to Maria in 1999.

And Bill's wonderful 43 year marriage to Judge Harriett Taylor had a profound impact on me. I have never observed a better, warmer, more trusting partnership than theirs.

In all of his endeavors, certain personal qualities about Bill always stood out. First, was Bill's brilliance. His mind was quick and facile, especially in moments when something had to be forged that could command a bi-partisan legislative consensus. Not surprisingly, Ted Kennedy, Hamilton Fish, and Don Edwards were his best friends in Congress. Next, was his exceptional sense of humor. Bill could really tell a story. His puns, his pointed sarcasm, and quick wit always were entertaining companions during a